

Mosman Council Chambers

A brief history



Local Studies Service
Mosman Library
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FIRST MOSMAN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Mosman was constituted a separate Municipality on 11 April, 1893. From 1868 the area had been part of the Borough of St. Leonards, known as the Mosman Ward. Mosman's separation from the Borough of St Leonards was proclaimed by His Excellency, The Honourable Sir Frederick Matthew Darley, Lieutenant Governor.



At the first election for the Mosman Council in 1893 there were 832 people eligible to vote.

Those elected were:

- Richard Harnett Jnr. – first Mayor of Mosman
- Patrick Taylor
- Richard Moran
- Charles Cowles
- John Noble
- Hugh Rose
- Thomas Bladen
- John Gerald Cannon
- Archibald Mcalpine

The first meeting of Mosman Council was held on Thursday 9 June, 1893 at 7.30 pm in the Community Hall, a two storey wooden building erected in 1880 by Richard Harnett Jnr. The hall had also served as a school and a church. The address was Great Military Road next to the present-day site of Mosman Junction Post Office opposite Belmont Road. The rental for the hall was 17/6 per week.

From 1896 the Mosman Municipality comprised three wards, North, East and West. In 1902 this was increased to four wards, with the addition of Balmoral. The North Ward was later renamed Middle Harbour Ward.

SECOND MOSMAN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

On 27 July 1897, Mosman Council was given 6 months notice to quit the Community Hall.



On 8 September 1898, Alderman Horning moved that a new building should be built which was not to cost more than 1100 pounds. The new two-storeyed chambers of brick and stone were built on Military Road, at the corner of Myahgah Road, closer to Spit Junction. This location was considered more appropriate as it was believed that Spit Junction would be the commercial centre of Mosman.

The Chambers were designed by architect, James Peddle and built by M T Nicholson, of Willoughby. This was James Peddle's first commission for local government and was considered by other councils to be a good example of civic architecture. Completed in 1900 for a total of 1100 pounds, the Chambers were opened on Friday 3 May 1901, less than a year after the foundation stone had been laid in October 1900. At this time the first Mayoral Chair was commissioned.



Annexe can be seen to the left, c. 1920

In 1904, Mosman Council built a two storey annexe alongside the Town Hall facing Military Road. This was rented to the Mosman Masonic Lodge until 1912.

THIRD MOSMAN COUNCIL CHAMBERS



The Peddle building fulfilled Council's requirements until the 1930s when larger premises were needed. Architects, Leonard Herbert, Edward Wilson and Henry Pynor, in association with the Mosman Council architect, Alfred Hale, were commissioned to design new Council Chambers. The building, on the site of Peddle's chambers, was built by H N Thompson & Co., and cost 9667 pounds. The opening

ceremony held on Thursday 18 April, 1940 was performed by His Excellency, the Governor of New South Wales, The Lord Wakehurst, K.C.M.G.,.

FOURTH MOSMAN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The fourth chambers were designed by Travis Partners Pty Ltd. These chambers, opened in 1988 and called the Mosman Civic Square, were an integral part of the Mosman Square Project and won the National Award for Innovation in Local Government.



While retaining the scale of the original Council Chambers, the new complex provided accommodation for council and council staff, seven shops and a restaurant. It also included a landscaped civic area intended to enhance the urban environment.

A number of features were included which contributed to the impact of Mosman Square such as re-laying the 1901 Foundation Stone and various plaques within the wall of the landscaped area and incorporating the Leahy Memorial. Three water features were installed including two fountains donated by local residents. The Antico Fountain, an 18th Century Italian marble fountain, donated by Sir Tristan Antico and the O'Keefe Fountain, a 19th Century cast iron fountain, donated by The Hon. Mr Justice Barry O'Keefe, AM, QC.

Recent additions include the sculpture, Meeting Place (Welumbulla Cyfarfod) by Anne Ferguson in 2000 and in 2007 the Horse Trough memorial to the First Fire Brigade in Mosman.

The Village Green was Stage II of the Mosman Square development and resulted in landscaping a section of Myahgah Road up to the Cenotaph in Mosman Park.

The Mosman Civic Square was opened on Friday 13 May 1988 by His Excellency Air Marshall Sir James Rowland, Governor of New South Wales.

MOSMAN'S SEAL AND MOTTO

First Seal



The first official seal (crest) was designed when Mosman was incorporated as a Municipality in 1893.

A resident Livingston Hopkins, known "Hop of the Bulletin", designed the first seal. His design was of a spouting whale with water and the sun forming the backdrop. This symbolised Mosman's beginnings as a whaling station established by Archibald Mosman and after whom the suburb was named.

The Council's motto, which is still in use today, "*Tutus in Undis*", is believed to mean "*In safe waters*".

Second Seal

In 1952 Alderman Allan Gamble designed a new seal which incorporated other symbols relevant to Mosmar history.

At the top, an anchor rests enveloped by the sun, a traditional maritime symbol. Below the anchor the spouting whale was retained as a reminder of Mosman's early whaling industry.



On the left, two mounted guns signify the fortifications built at the strategic positions of Georges Head, Middle Head and Bradleys Head. In times of threat of war during the 19th century, and during wartime in the 20th century, Mosman's shores were recognised as having some of the strongest vantage points in case of attack on Sydney and the harbour.

On the right, is a sailing ship representing HMS *Sirius*, the flagship of the First Fleet, which in 1789 was careened in what is now known as Mosman Bay.

At each side are two stylised dolphins representing further links with the sea, and the sea life, that surrounds Mosman and is an integral part of its heritage.

Sources:

Mosman Council Minutes 1893-1902

Mosman Library Local History Collection

Souter, Gavin, *Mosman; a history*. Melbourne, MUP, 1994

Sturrock, Rob, *A pictorial history of Mosman*, vol 1 & 2. Mosman, R. Sturrock, 1982

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